MARVEL UNIVERSE

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FORCE WORKS™

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IRON MAN, SCARLET WITCH, U.S. AGENT, SPIDER-WOMAN, CENTURY. . . BATTLE-HARDENED HEROES OF AWESOME POWER AND COURAGE WHO HAVE CUT LOOSE FROM THE PAST TO FORGE A NEW TEAM READY TO CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES OF THESE DANGEROUS MODERN TIMES. . .

STAN LEE PRESENTS: FORCE WORKS

TRAITOR'S GATE

NANTUCKET. A LONELY INLET, AN ATLANTIC MIDNIGHT...

THE CLAPBOARD BOATSHEDS CREAK AS THE TIDE SUCKS AT THEIR TIMBER SUPPORTS.

A RAIN SQUALL DRIZZLES IN FROM THE OCEAN...

MOON-RAKER?

APART FROM THOSE SOUNDS -- SILENCE.

AS A WISE MAN ONCE SAID--

--IT'S TOO DARN QUIET.

WHAT?!

I DON'T LIKE THIS AT ALL!

ABNETT & LANNING STORY | JIM CHEUNG PENCILS | REY GARCIA INKS | JACK MORELLI LETTERS | JOE ROSAS COLORS | NEL YOMTOV EDITOR | MARK GRUENWALD SWINGIN' BLUEJEANS

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WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE? A ROMANTIC MOONLIGHT STROLL ALONG THE SHORE, JUST YOU AND ME...

WELL, WE COULD DIE. I WOULDN'T LIKE THAT.

DIE? BE SERIOUS. WITH ME HERE?

I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR CONFIDENCE PROBLEM...

...PLATO ESTIMATED THE ODDS OF US BEING ATTACKED AT A LITTLE UNDER THREE TO ONE.

WEEOW!

YAAHH!!

mgglgkk! mgklgkk!

TRUST ME, BABE.

NEVER GONNA HAPPEN.

SPRACKKH

OKAY, MAYBE "NEVER" WAS THE WRONG WORD.

YEAH... AND FEELING PRETTY VINDICATED.

YOU OKAY, SPI?

mgglkp!!

SPIDER-WOMAN TO FORCE WORKS! PRIORITY ASSIS-TANCE REQUEST! WE'RE AT THE BOAT SHEDS ON CHESKEAG INLET AND WE'VE FOUND ONE OF THE D.A.E.M.O.N.S!

LOCK ON TO MY COMM-STUD SIGNAL AND GET HERE AS FAST AS YOU C--

--UGNHH!!

mmggkllp!

BRAKSH

JULIA!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, MEAT-BALL!

I'M SORTA FOND OF THAT GIRL. MESS WITH HER IN ANY WAY...

TZZZKTTT

...AND YOU GET A TASTE OF MY CORPOSANT FIRE!

TZZZZZZZKOOM

F-WHOOM

DAH! NEEDLE-LASERS!

LEMME GUESS... CHUCKLES BROUGHT SOME FRIENDS!

chooom chooom chooom chooom

WHEN YOU'RE DONE TESTING YOUR RAY GUNS, BOYS...

...LET'S KNIFE!!

Gmpk!!

PARDON ME, BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE SWALLOWED YOUR SNORKEL.

DON'T GET UP.

SERIOUSLY, DON'T.

SKRICH

AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

NOW THAT WAS VERY POOR. YOU REALLY HADN'T THOUGHT IT THROUGH, HAD YOU?

mgllpk!

OKAY, MISTER DEEPWATER ACTIVITY EXO-MANIPULATION OUTERWEAR NETWORK...

...THINK YOU CAN TURN, LOCK YOUR WEAPONS AND FIRE BEFORE I FRY YOU WITH CORPOSANT? HERE'S TONIGHT'S CLUE...

...NEVER GONNA HAPPEN!

OW.

S-SLADE? MOON-RAKER?

NO ANSWER. THAT PUNCH TOOK ME RIGHT THROUGH THE BOATHOUSE WALL. HE MUST STILL BE OUTSIDE WITH TH--

SMAK!!

mggpkllpk!

...GET BACK IN THE PLUNGE POOL, FISH-FACE!

THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE! A WEAPON WOULD BE GOOD RIGHT NOW...

OH, NO YOU DON'T...

...FAILING THAT, A BIG STICK WILL DO!

SOMEONE'S COMING!

STEADY...

STEADY...

...NOW!

THIS YOUR PADDLE, MISS?

SLADE!

PAFF

Oh, SO NOW SHE RECOGNIZES ME.

mgghkk!!

whk-RAKK

HEY! WE'RE BUSY IN HERE!

SOME PEOPLE!

YOU TWO OKAY?! I GOT HERE AS FAST AS I COULD.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

COUPLE MOST LIKELY... *FIVE.* SEA-WEEDS... *NIL.*

WHAT *HE* SAID. WE'RE MAKING OUT JUST FINE, IRON MAN... TO *COIN A PHRASE.*

TIME CHECK, PLATO?

TIME ELAPSED: SIX MINUTES FIFTY TWO, SPIDER-WOMAN.

THANKS, END PROGRAM.

VROOM ROOM PROGRAM *"NANTUCKET"* CANCELED.

SO... DID WE JUST SAVE THE WORLD?

WE KEPT THE D.A.E.M.O.N.S. BUSY FOR THE SIX MIN-UTES IT TOOK THE OTHERS TO REACH US... AND THAT *WAS* THE POINT OF THE EXERCISE.

YOU LEFT YOURSELF *WIDE OPEN* WHEN YOU CALLED FOR HELP. THE D.A.E.M.O.N. *FLATTENED* YOU BUT GOOD.

ALERTING THE TEAM WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SAVING MYSELF IN THE LONG RUN. I STAND BY MY DECISION.

JULIA... YOUR *LIFE'S* THE *ONLY* IMPORTANT THING AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED. I HATE TO SEE YOU *RISKING IT!*

SWEET OF YOU, SLADE... BUT HATE AWAY! IF I HAVE TO RISK MY LI--

NEVER GONNA HAPPEN...

SHWPP

HEY, FOLKS! GOTTA CHECK THE--

Oh--

DON'T MIND ME!

OOP! FISHER!

SORRY, MAN!

NO PROBLEM. "BAD TIMING" IS MY MIDDLE NAME.

HI, AMANDA.

HELLO, JULIA. GOOD WORK-OUT.?

THE BEST! FISHER, MY MAN, THAT NANTUCKET PROGRAM IS A PIECE OF WORK. IT FELT LIKE WE WERE REALLY BACK THERE!

THANKS. I AIM TO PLEASE.

IT MUST BE HARD FOR YOU TO SEE JULIA AND SLADE TOGETHER. I KNOW YOU'VE CARRIED A TORCH FOR HER FOR THE LONG-EST TIME...

SLADE'S A GREAT GUY... AND I'VE HAD SIX MONTHS TO GET USED TO THEM AS A COUPLE AFTER ALL...

OKAY, MR. TRUMAN... TOAST, O.J. AND AN OMELETTE WITH FRESH CHIVES... HOW'S THAT SOUND?

I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU, BUT MY MOUTH IS WATERING TOO MUCH.

Y'KNOW, I THINK IT'S GREAT THE WAY OL' FISHER DOESN'T HOLD A GRUDGE...

I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT NIGHT HE TOLD ME HOW HE WAS ALWAYS INTO YOU...

UNCLE NEL'S FINEST WHITE BREAD Medium Slice

POOR FISHER... I GAVE HIM SUCH A HARD TIME AT FIRST, AND ALL THE WHILE HE WAS PINING FOR ME.

IF I'D KNOWN, MAYBE I WOULD HAVE--

MOTHER - LOVER SUPERHEROINE LEGEND

AND MAYBE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE...

DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT ORANGE JUICE?

YEAH, I JUST GOT IT FROM THE COOLER.

AND HID IT WHERE, EXACTLY?

...YOU DIDN'T GET IT OUT OF THE COOLER AT ALL? MAYBE YOU'RE GETTING FORGETFUL?

MAYBE YOU'RE... IN LOVE?

ON THE--

--OH.

WELL, MAYBE...

MOTHER LOVER SUPERHEROINE LEGEND

Hmmm.

MAYBE I AM.

Whooo... DID I SAY THAT OUT LOUD?

SAY WHAT, BABE?

SO WHEN ARE THE OTHERS DUE BACK FROM THE NEW YORK REUNION?

LATER TODAY THEY SAID.

GOOD. THE WORKS FEELS EMPTY WITHOUT THEM.

AND I MISS HAVING *AGENT* AROUND!

YOU *ARE* JOKING!

WHEN HAVE YOU KNOWN *ME* TO JOKE? HOW DO I MISS HIM? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS--

...I MISS THE WAY THOSE VEINS IN HIS FOREHEAD *BULGE* WHEN I PULL A STUNT ON HIM. I MISS THE WAY HE *HATES* BEING THE BUTT OF A JOKE. I MISS THE WAY THE WORD "BUTT" FITS HIM SO *PERFECTLY*...

I *KNOW*. IT'S SO EASY TO *MISS* HIM, ISN'T IT?

SO ANYWAY... WILL A FOUR-EGG OMELETTE BE ENOUGH, OR SHALL I--

--use the whole carton?

WHAT'S *UP*, BABE?

BUT THAT'S...

I MEAN I THOUGHT THAT I--

I--

Uhmn... NOTHING...

A THOUSAND MILES AWAY, TWO MILES UP...

... A HEX SHIP CHIMERA CLEAVES THE SOLID BLUE OF THE SUMMER SKY AT MACH 6, HEADING WEST, HEADING HOME...

SO, WANDA... THIS BABY HAS SHOWN A CLEAN PAIR O' HEELS ON HER FIRST TRIP OUT, NOT A GLITCH IN SIGHT...

...WHADDAYA SAY WE ROTATE THE CHIMERA WITH HER SISTER SHIPS ON A PERMANENT BASIS?

IT'LL BE GOOD TO HAVE THREE HEX SHIPS ON STANDBY AT ALL TIMES. WON'T IT, WANDA?

YOU LISTENING, WANDA? HEY WITCH -- COULD YA GET OUT AND CHECK UNDER THE HOOD?!

WE'RE BREAKIN' UP, CAP'N! THE WEE ENGINES CANAE TAKE MUCH MORE O' THIS!!

I WAS LISTENING, JACK. THE CHIMERA CHECKS OUT. SO NOTED.

IF YOU'RE ASKING ME FOR AN OPINION ...YOUR JIMMY DOOHAN IMPERSONATION STINKS!

I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT THE NEW YORK REUNION. IT WAS GREAT TO SEE THE AVENGERS AGAIN...

YEAH, MAYBE WE COULD FIX UP A SLUMBER PARTY WITH THEM.

SPARE ME THE SCORN, AGENT. THEY ARE OUR FRIENDS.

IS THAT WHY THEY KICKED US OUT OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST?

AND EXCUSE ME FOR SAYING IT, BUT YOU SEEMED PRETTY CHUMMY WITH STARK ALL OF A SUDDEN.

HE MADE AN *EFFORT*, JACK. THAT'S ALL I WANTED.

AFTER THE *GRIEF* HE'S GIVEN YOU THESE PAST SIX MONTHS? I CAN'T *BELIEVE* YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR TUNE!

MAYBE WE'VE BEEN UNDER-*ESTIMATING* TONY. HE'S ONLY *HUMAN*, AFTER ALL.

Y-HUH! AND I'M THE LOVE CHILD OF AGATHA HARKNESS!

C'MON, WANDA! HE'S A POMPOUS, OPINIONATED, SELF-RIGHT-EOUS--

I'M GUESSING... YOU DON'T LIKE HIM?

--ARROGANT AND HUMOR-LESS--

AND *HE* GAVE *YOU* A SECOND CHANCE WITH *FORCE WORKS*.

TOUCHE', WANDA. BUT HE'S NEVER BEEN THE *EASIEST* TO GET ALONG WITH.

WELL, MAYBE SO... BUT HE'S ALSO THE REASON WE'RE A *TEAM*. AND HE'S ONE OF THE *BRAVEST* MEN I'VE EVER MET.

SO I'M PRE-PARED TO CUT HIM SOME SLACK. ALL RIGHT?

Hmmm.

THERE *IS* SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING I WANNA SHOW YOU WHEN WE GET BACK.

WHEN CENTURY AND ME WERE LAYING LOW FROM THE BROKER, WE FOUND THIS *ROOM* UNDER THE WORKS. *SEALED*, FULLA *WEIRD* STUFF-- LIKE STARK HAD SOME SECRET--

SECRET *WHAT*?

PLEASE... STOP READING BAD THINGS INTO EVERY-THING TONY DOES!

FINE. FORGET I EVER MENTIONED IT.

HEY... YOU OKAY, WANDA?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE OVER THOSE HEAD-ACHES!

I WISH. EVERY TIME I THINK I'M FREE OF THEM... I GET ANOTHER SPASM. LIKE CLOCKWORK. EVERY FEW DAYS...

ANYHOW, IT'S EASING NOW. GOING AS FAST AS IT CAME... Uhnn...

THEY COULD BE STRES$-INDUCED. I MUST TRY THE DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES CENTURY SHO--

Oh, CENTURY.

IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW DAYS, BUT I MISS HIM ALREADY. I NEVER EVEN GOT TO SAY GOODBYE.

TRUST ME, HE'LL BE FINE. I THINK HE WAS GLAD THE BROKER SHOWED UP OUTTA THE BLUE. IT'S GIVEN HIM A CHANCE TO GET HIS LIFE BACK TO-GETHER.*

BUT I GUESS HIM GOING HAS PUNCHED A HOLE IN TEAM TACTICS, RIGHT?

*LAST ISSUE. --NEL

RIGHT. WE'LL HAVE TO RETHINK OUR DEPLOY-MENT... NOW THAT WE DON'T HAVE A TELE-PORTER TO RELY ON.

JACK..? TELEMETRY JUST PICKED UP THE HAND-SHAKE FROM THE WORKS OUTER MARKER...

...LET'S BEGIN LANDING PROCE-DURES.

AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE TEAM. WE'LL MAKE DO WITH FIVE RATHER THAN THE USUAL SIX...

SUNSET, THE PACIFIC COAST...

HE FALLS FROM HEAVEN LIKE A CHROMED SPEAR-HEAD, HIS SUIT FLASH-REFLECTING ALL THE REDS AND GOLDS OF THE DYING SUN...

HIS BOOT-JETS SIGH LIKE A GULFSTREAM BREEZE.

SILENT, ELECTRONIC CHALLENGES ISSUE FROM THE BEACH-HOUSE BELOW AND ARE ANSWERED BY PULSED ULTRASONIC CODES THAT ONLY HE KNOWS...

INVISIBLE DEFENSES RELAX AND LET HIM PASS...

DELICATE GLASS DOORS THAT COULD REPEL A CANNON SHELL WHISPER OPEN...

HE'S HOME AGAIN.

IRON MAN.

TONY STARK.

BLEEP BLEEP BLEEP

BLEEP BLEEP

INCOMING SECURE CHANNEL TRANSMISSION

SOURCE: HONG KONG

ACCEPT CALL. MAIN SCREEN VOICE AND PICTURE.

MR. STARK? THIS IS SUZI ENDO, RETURNING YOUR CALL.

YOUR MESSAGE WAS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE... AND AN HONOR!

I'LL BE ON THE NEXT FLIGHT TO L.A.!

GOOD! THEN I'LL SEE YOU SOON!

DON'T BE MODEST, SUZI. FROM THE BREAKTHROUGH WORK YOU'VE BEEN SHOWING ME RECENTLY, I'M CERTAIN YOU'RE THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THIS.

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR DECISION YET?

BLIP

END TRANSMIT

COMPUTER? LIST ALL CALLS RECEIVED IN THE PAST TWELVE HOURS...

ONE CALL FROM BAMBINA ARBOGAST FORWARDING DETAILS OF STARK ENTERPRISES R&D MEETING TOMORROW, P.M.

ONE CALL FROM PETER GYRICH. NO MESSAGE. ONE CALL FROM ERICA SONDHEIM. NO MESSAGE.

THREE CALLS FROM BETHANY CABE. MESSAGE PERSONAL.

ONE CALL FROM WANDA MAXIMOFF/ FORCE WORKS H.Q... REQUESTING NOTIFICATION OF YOUR NEXT INTENDED VISIT TO SAID FACILITY.

CONNECT ME WITH SONDHEIM, SECURE CHANNEL.

WIPE THE REST.

SOMEWHERE ELSE.

SOMEWHERE DARK AND STIFLING, WHERE THE METAL WALLS AND DECK PLATES VIBRATE TO THE CEASELESS THRENODY OF A LIGHT-SPEED DRIVE...

LOCK DISEN-GAGED.

ZPT

FTSSSSH

W-Who's there?

Is that YOU, Deliverer?

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.

DID YOU THINK YOU WERE SAFE IN HERE, YOU KLAKKING SPECK OF FILTH? SAFELY LOCKED AWAY IN THE CELLS WHERE YOU ONCE HELD US? DID YOU THINK WE'D FORGET ABOUT YOU?

THINK AGAIN.

KLEKK

YARRGH!

SKEWER, NO! I FORBID IT!

TZZZKT

No! No! Mercy!!

OUT OF MY WAY, TELEPORTER! THE BROKER DOES NOT DESERVE TO LIVE!!

SO YOU TELEPORT HERE TO STOP ME? WHY, LONG-HAIR, WHY?!

YOU TOO SUFFERED AT HIS HANDS!

Uhm! IN THE NAME OF FETH, SKEWER--

HE WILL PAY! THAT MUCH I GUARANTEE! BUT NOT NOW! NOT THIS WAY!!

WH-

-ANG

YOUR BLOOD RUNS TOO HOT! FIERCE / WILD, SKEWER--I GUESSED YOU'D TRY A TRICK LIKE THIS!

...STOP THIS...

TZZZK

Huh?

TZZZK

NOW!

WHUK

GRAHH!

GET UP, SKEWER. GET OUT.

Darling! You SAVED me! How DASHING!

I'd APPLAUD, but well... what IS the sound of ONE HAND clapping?

SHUT UP, BROKER, DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK OR I'LL TAKE MY BLADE TO YOUR OTHER WRIST.

Hmmph.

DOOR-- RESEAL AND LOCK.

ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE AN ENEMY OF ME, SKEWER?

NO, CENTURY, NO...

...BUT YOU FOUGHT TOOTH AND NAIL TO FREE US FROM THAT PIECE OF KLAKK... AND NOW YOU GUARD HIM LIKE HE WAS A KIN TO YOU...

IF YOU... AND I... AND THE REST OF THE CREW ARE TO REACH OUR HOME-WORLDS, WE NEED HIM ALIVE.

THE SHIP'S NAVI-GATION RECORDS ARE ENCRYPTED. THAT MONSTER'S HEAD IS THE ONLY AVAILABLE SOURCE OF THE DATA WE NEED...

I'M BEGINNING TO REGRET EMBARKING ON THIS MISSION.

THE ONLY THINGS THIS RUFFIAN CREW HAVE IN COMMON ARE A DESIRE TO GET HOME AND A THIRST FOR REVENGE.

KEEPING THEM TOGETHER MAY GET ME KILLED BEFORE MY OWN QUEST IS SATISFIED...

...SO LET'S SEE HE KEEPS IT FOR A WHILE LONGER.

FINE.

BUT DON'T MAKE ME WAIT FOREVER.

BUT I'M COMMITTED NOW. THERE'S NO GOING BACK...

"...THE EARTH, FORCE WORKS, MY FRIENDS... EVERYTHING I LEFT BEHIND IS TOO FAR AWAY NOW."

AND TOO FAR AWAY...

WHAT D'YOU THINK, KIDDO?

SNIKT

BIG ONES AT THE TOP, MOM. THEN THE PINK ONES. THEN THE FERNY STUFF.

SPOKEN LIKE AN EXPERT.

SO...WHO BOUGHT THEM FOR YOU, MOM?

NEVER TEASE YOUR MOTHER, RACHEL. IT'S CRUEL.

BUT I...

WANDA!

HI THERE!

AFTERNOON, LADIES.

SO HOW WAS THE REUNION?

AH... Y'KNOW... IT WAS OKAY... SORTA.

IGNORE HIM. HE LOST AT POKER, TO JARVIS.

THAT MUST'VE HURT.

HEY, RACH! HERE YA GO--AS PROMISED!

COOL!

I ♡ NEW YORK

IT FITS... RIGHT?

KINDA. I DUNNO. I CAN'T SEE...

I ♥ NEW YORK

Heh! WHAT'D YOU DO, DANIELS? USE YOUR OWN HEAD AS A GUIDE TO GAUGE THE SIZE?

SO JARVIS WHUPPED YOU GOOD, HUH?

GIMME STRENGTH.

HANK PYM SENDS HIS REGARDS. HE'S SO SWEET. HE ALWAYS ASKS FOR Y--

JULIA? WHAT'S UP?

I...I...

YEAH... YEAH... LAUGH IT UP, TRUMAN.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
BABE? WHAT IS IT?
THE ROSES YOU GAVE ME! I'D CUT THEM, AND I'D... AND I'D...
MOTHER LOVER SUPERHEROINE LEGEND
TAKE IT EASY.
OKAY... IT'S OKAY. MY MISTAKE.
RACHEL?
WANDA? WHO'S THAT MAN?
WHAT MAN, HONEY?
HIM. THE MAN WHO LAUGHED AT MY CAP.?
BUT... THAT'S YOUR MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND.
MOM'S BOY-FRIEND?
BUT... I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE.
next:
WORLD ENOUGH and TIME